

STATE OF ALASKA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Source
HR 9 am

House
Resolve No.
9



Encouraging the homeporting of new United States Coast Guard icebreakers in the state.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

WHEREAS the United States Coast Guard has proposed a renovation and expansion of its Seattle waterfront base, which, over the next decade, will be home to three new icebreakers and other vessels; and

WHEREAS the United States has a strategic interest in keeping pace with the development and deployment of icebreaker fleets by Arctic nations such as Russia, Finland, Sweden, China, and other nations that are currently outpacing the United States in the number of icebreakers and sustained presence in the Arctic, which provide security for those nations' research, military, fishing, and merchant fleets; and

WHEREAS the United States Coast Guard aims to support the United States in conducting national missions, responding to critical events, and projecting American presence in the high latitudes; and

WHEREAS the increased activity in the Arctic underscores a commensurate need for proximate maritime presence in the Arctic region of the United States to enable the

responsible development of resources, foster maritime commerce, safeguard the well-being of Arctic residents and ecosystems, facilitate emergency and disaster preparedness and response, and protect the sovereignty of the United States; and

WHEREAS the state is at the forefront of Arctic knowledge, research, and development and is uniquely positioned to provide, support, manage, and facilitate ease of access to the high latitudes; and

WHEREAS the state's workforce has the experience and regional knowledge to support the operations of the United States Coast Guard, the maintenance of Coast Guard vessels, and the extraction of natural resources in the world's high latitudes, which include an estimated 10 percent of the world's oil reserves and an abundance of fish stocks; and

WHEREAS the United States Coast Guard currently has limited Arctic emergency response capabilities and no permanent bases near the strategically important Bering Strait or the state's North Slope to support Coast Guard operations; and

WHEREAS the January 2012 delivery of fuel to Nome, Alaska, by the Russian fuel tanker Renda, escorted by the United States Coast Guard's only polar icebreaker in service at the time, Healy, emphasizes the need for icebreaker presence in Alaska; and

WHEREAS the United States Coast Guard should have a greater overall presence in the Arctic, with the ability to stage assets closer to future shipping, oil and gas drilling, commercial fishing activities, and military and other critical events; and

WHEREAS Alaska has an abundance of deepwater ports strategically located near established fuel storage infrastructure, availability of supply depots for the icebreakers, and housing, jobs, schools, and shopping for members of the United States Coast Guard and their families; and

WHEREAS Alaska is the only state located in the Arctic; and

WHEREAS homeporting icebreakers in the state would enhance the United States Coast Guard's ability to meet its stated objectives;

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives encourages proposed new United States Coast Guard icebreakers to be strategically homeported in Alaska rather than in the Port of Seattle.